

This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

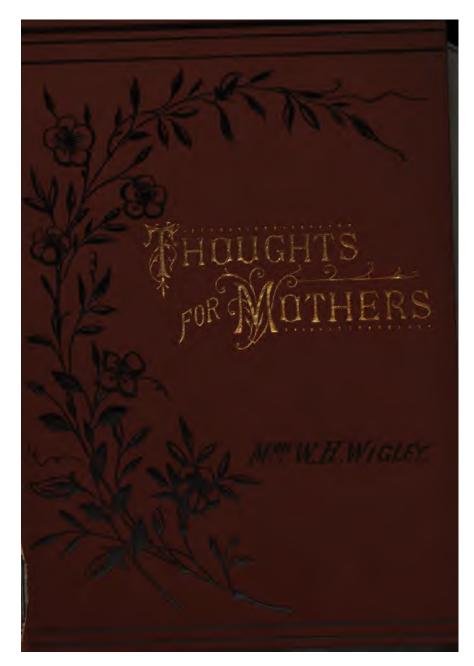
Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + Refrain from automated querying Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

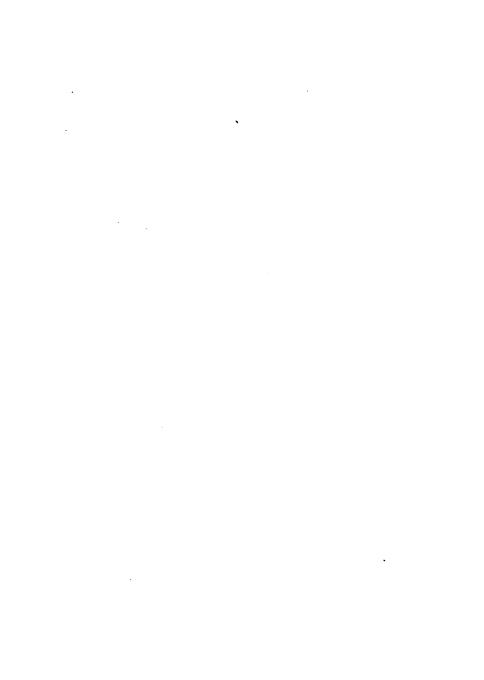
About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at http://books.google.com/











THOUGHTS FOR MOTHERS.

BY

MRS. W. H. WIGLEY,

AUTHOR OF

"WORKERS AT HOME," "OUR HOME WORK," "THE MERRYWEATHERS,"
"THE MARSHFIELD MAIDENS," "CLAIMS FOR KINDNESS,"
ETC. ETC.



LONDON:

JAMES NISBET & CO., 21 BERNERS STREET.

MDCCCLXXXI.

270. 9. 982.

Ballantyne Press

BALLANTYNE, HANSON AND CO. EDINBURGH AND LONDON





PREFACE.

"From dawn of day to set of sun, A mother's work is never done."

HIS is true. Very seldom, indeed, do
we come upon a time when we can
say, "Now I have finished up everything—there is nothing more to be done, except
my thinking."

If ever a compulsory time of inaction is brought to us, we are apt to fret and worry over it. Yet such times should be very precious to us.

We have quite as much need of thinking time

as of working time. Our very best and most efficient deeds are but the carrying out of our deepest thoughts.

Will those who share with me the sacred name of mother, forgive me, then, for suggesting to them in these pages a few thoughts? Long years of experience have taught me their need, and their value. I have gathered them, knowing they are but an outline which every mother will need to fill in—a scaffolding by means of which each one for herself must build up.

Go on thy way, and mark the pathway well, To those who follow every danger tell; A blessed thing it is if we may know, That through our fallings, others safer go.





CONTENTS.

								1	PAGI
I.	ABOUT	INFLUEN	CE	•	•	•	•	•	7
II.	ABOUT	EXAMPLE		•	•	•	•	•	15
III.	ABOUT	TRAINING	3 AND	TEAC	HING	•	•	•	24
ıv.	ABOUT	HINDRAN	CES		•	•	•		41
v.	ABOUT	HELPS	•	•	•	•	•	•	54
VI.	REWAR	DS AND I	UNISE	IMENT	s.	•			64
VII.	ABOUT	CHILDRE	n's pl	EASU	RES				83



THOUGHTS FOR MOTHERS.

T.

About Influence.



REMEMBER reading many years ago, in some miscellaneous papers by Charles Dickens, two statements which

impressed me very forcibly at the time, and which I have never since forgotten. I will write them down here.

The first was—If the eldest born in a family be a son, there will always exist a peculiar sympathy between the child and his mother; thought will answer to thought, and heart to heart.

The second was-That lads who receive all

their early training from the lips of a good mother, invariably turn out to be good men and true—a blessing in their day and generation.

These statements, doubtless, could be substantiated by facts and illustrations without number, but I am not prepared to accept them if they set bounds to what I believe to be bound-Surely a mother's influence is unlimited powerful alike to sons and daughters. In all her children a good mother will find thoughts and feelings responsive to those which stir her own mind; and by elder or younger, girl or boy, her lessons will be accepted with a confidence, and retained with a tenacity, which no other teaching is privileged to meet. Little ones of tender years will manfully and determinedly pin their faith to her wisdom, truth, and ability, and will silence every argument with the all-convincing words, "My mother said so;" and children of larger growth-men and women in their own homes—will reproduce the plans and schemes she carried out, and hold them to be wise and orthodox, in spite of all the revelations of modern science or the pros and cons of the most learned professor under the sun.

A mother's influence, how wonderful it is! Its power is on us before we are conscious of our own existence: it follows us all through life; it stands by us in sorrow, it stirs and moves us in joy, and it outlives and outlasts that of all other to which we may be subjected.

And it could scarcely be otherwise. As mothers, we stand alone in so much: in our love, in our anxieties, in our sacrifices, and in our unselfishness. It is just and right that such peculiar service should meet with some peculiar reward, and that our memory and our aim should be for ever enshrined in the hearts of those for whom we do and suffer.

Mothers, this power of ours is a blessed thing as well as peculiar—ours only. For the intensity of our love brings us also an intensity of anxiety. As

we hold our darlings to our hearts, or gather them to our side, we shudder and shiver at the sounds which come to our ears of the roar and raging of the battle they must fight alone, and at the sight of the snares and pitfalls spread so thickly in the paths they must tread also alone. What should we do at such times, if we did not know that we who most desire their good have most power in shaping and moulding them! They are ours as they are none other's, placed in our hearts and under our hands by a loving Master; and we who are most alive—sensitively alive—to their peril, and most conscious of their natural defects, are best able to train them, so that, "having done all, they may stand."

And yet, blessed as is this privilege, it is one that we must receive with fear and trembling; for, alas! there may be, nay, only too often there is, a reverse side to the picture. There is no agent for good which cannot also be made an agent for evil; and the truth holds with regard to our

influence over our children. We can nurture and nourish, prune and cultivate, until our little buds blossom into beauty; we can also warp and mismanage and neglect, until evil habits, evil thoughts, and evil desires hold their own in the young hearts, and well-nigh efface the image of God in which they were created.

O mothers! let us not shrink from thinking out these thoughts, solemn as they are. Holy and precious as is the work we can do, and are fitted to do, it is quite possible for us to miss the one object that work should accomplish. We would give our lives to secure good for our darlings: let us take care lest, in our blindness, we may bring about only their harm.

Oh, it is pitiful that it should be possible for us to do so! That with a love stronger than death, which never flinches or falters, mothers only too often spoil and ruin that which they most desire to see perfected. We hear of men and women upon whose lives the "holy, holy,

holy" of loving service has seemed to be stamped, who trace every good impulse to the influence of a dear mother; and we hear of others, sunken and degraded and ruined, who with bitterness and cursing lay the blame of their destruction at their mothers' door.

Mothers, we did well to say these are solemn thoughts. We cannot estimate our power too highly, but we should exercise it with awe and judgment. In all things—in religion, in prosperity, in greatness, in wisdom and learning, in thorough integrity of purpose, and in peace and goodwill—our country in the future will be what the mothers of the present day decree that it shall be. Think of this. There is no evil thing under the sun—infidelity, intemperance, unholiness, impurity—be it ever so vile or base or strongly rooted, but it must slink from sight and hide its head in shame, if the mothers determine that it shall be stamped out.

And if these things are all true—and who shall



gainsay them?—how is it, that while we have the power of doing so much, we are actually doing so little?

We grieve over the irreverence of the young men and lads of the age. We mourn that so many daughters round us show so much resistance to natural restraint; do we realise that it is with us "to cut off the supplies" which would fill the ranks in the future? We agree that our personal influence with the children is second to none other, but do we not accept this as we only too often accept other blessings—as a matter of course; a something that always has been, and always will be, without especial thankfulness or earnest prayer, or a sense of urgent responsibility or unceasing effort?

O mothers of babes! let us rouse from this indifference. Agencies for evil, moved only by hate, never slacken their endeavours or miss any opportunity to work mischief; their energy and perseverance never tire. Shall we, mothers, with

our measureless love, be less on the alert than they?

Remember that while we tarry, they do not.

"While men slept, the enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat."

Slowly, surely, unceasingly, they work: dare we stand still?





II.

About Example.



N one of the concluding chapters of "Self Help," Mr. Smiles makes use of these words:—

"So much does the moral health depend upon the moral atmosphere that is breathed, and so great is the influence daily exercised by parents over their children by living a life before their eyes, that perhaps the best system of parental instruction may be summed up in two words, 'improve thyself.'"

You may shoot a wild animal, you may easily destroy the life of a child, but you can never destroy the effect of the deeds you have done. "Deeds live for ever." They will remain to be

reproduced over and over, long after the doers of them are forgotten. We put into practice what we see performed before our eyes, far more readily than that which we only hear talked about. Very often when we hear of a fashion, or habit, or expression, we condemn it; but if it is introduced and adopted in our own circle, we not only condone it, but make it our own. Almost unconsciously the habits and customs of those with whom we are in constant intercourse become our habits and customs. This is so politically; we retain, and pride ourselves on our nationalities; it is so socially, as is evidenced by local practices and provincialisms; and it is so in domestic life, as is witnessed by the idiosyncrasies of individual families.

We said "unconsciously." And there is no doubt about this. We glide into these things without any plan or premeditation, or even a passing thought. It is almost as though we caught a habit after the same fashion as we are

said to catch a disease. And we are as powerful "to infect" others in this way, as we are ready "to be infected" ourselves. It is as though the essence of ourselves went out from us, and sensibly or insensibly affected those who came into contact with us, just as an odour leaves a flower. No matter what we may wish to exhibit or strive to conceal, there we are—as a whole; and as whole only do others behold us.

And the greater our mental development and strength of character, the more certainly and powerfully do we thus affect other people. Those who love us most, or admire us, or look up to us, or depend upon us, will instinctively follow the examples which we set before them.

And if this is so with those of riper years, still more it is so with our children; if strangers, after observing our way of acting, are ready "to do likewise," how much more readily will our own copy and imitate us. In their eyes we stand alone, without any equal or rival. "Mother

does it," is quite argument enough with them to make a thing estimable or allowable. It is of no use our holding up one course in theory, and exhibiting another in practice. Our authority may compel obedience for the present perhaps, but in the heart of the child there is grounded and established this resolve, "When I get big, I mean to do as mother does."

We have all smiled at the fallacy of the teaching which said, "Don't do as I do, do as I say." No one would look to learn honesty from a thief, or truth from a liar; and if ever we bring an example of evil before the notice of our children, we do it as a warning to deter them, and not to excite their emulation. Now and then we may show them the terrible consequences which surely attend the end of a sinful course, but it is only in order to fix in their minds the truth—"The way of transgressors is hard."

Mothers, seeing that these things are so, it is next to impossible that we should train our children to be that which we ourselves are not. No matter how cunningly we may fancy we disguise our real thoughts and intents and purposes, the eye of a very babe is keen enough to detect that it is a disguise, and to see through any dissembling on our part, long before it has tact enough to conceal the discovery made.

Our children study us constantly; they study other things only sometimes; and so wonderful is the tie between us, that when they see the action, they appear to see also the motive which prompts it. Have we not all of us experienced this? and do we not know that if we are anxious to keep anything from them, they will take infinite pains to discover that one thing?

A mother stands before her children as she is. If they are to get good from her teaching, they must see good in her example. The graces and excellences she would train them to practise, she must illustrate and make lovely in her own daily walk and conversation.

We asked in a previous page, "How is it that if our influence is so powerful, it really seems to do very little with our dear ones?" Shall we not find our answer here. Do we really believe that our influence and example are inseparable? In spite of our own shortcomings in love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, faith, patience, and charity, we think we can throw the weight of our influence in the opposite direction. And we cannot do it. We must affect our children by the "essence" of what we really are. They may never say it is so, they may never even know it is so; but all the same our mysterious power will be working their good or evil, according as its source in ourselves is good or evil.

Oh, why are we so apathetic about this? There is nothing of height or depth or difficulty or hardship, but a mother will compass it sooner than her offspring shall suffer. She will dare even death itself for their sakes. If the necessity for any effort once takes hold of her mind, she will give

herself no rest until such effort be made. Let us make sure about ourselves then. Is there need for any effort on our own part for our own sakes—any need for prayers and strivings and watchings? We must, we do affect our children's lives by our own. Are we making them every day purer and holier by the life we live in their sight? or are we taking off the first edge of their truth and innocence? Put this question to your heart, your soul, your conscience—"My child will imitate me—am I living the life I wish to see reproduced?"

And remember that your child may learn from you only the beginnings of things which he may carry on to their glorious or their most bitter endings. Because you stop at certain limits, can you ensure that they also shall allow themselves only the same length of tether?

And if at any time you find that any particular case shall make it expedient for you to alter your usual practice, or depart from the course you have most extolled, see that your child understands

fully why you think such a plan advisable. While the child is looking and pondering, talk over the matter with it. Say: "My darling, generally it is best to do such and such things, but because of this or that, I am compelled to do so and so instead; do you understand it?" In this way much doubt and perplexity will be spared to the child's mind, and their trust and confidence will be strengthened and settled by your wise forbearance. We owe it to the children, who depend so entirely upon us, that we shall leave them no chance of misunderstanding us.

Mothers, look upon the faces of the children whom God has given you. Stand by them as they are sleeping, or let your eyes follow their innocent gambols. Can you do aught to work mischief to them? Then, with your heart and eyes full, take the words of the prophet and form them into a prayer: "Oh, that my light may rise in obscurity, and my judgment be as the noonday;

that the Lord may guide me continually, and satisfy my soul in drought, and make fat my bones; that I may be like a watered garden, like springs of water whose waters fail not, so that they which be of me shall build up the old waste places, and raise up the foundations of many generations, and be called the repairers of the breaches, the restorers of the paths to dwell in."





III.

About Training and Teaching.

HEN a gardener undertakes the care of some choice tree, he will work for its good in two different ways. In order to shape it into beauty, he will prune off every undesirable shoot, and bend and train the promising ones in the right direction; and he will supply nourishment and dig about it, that the refreshing rain and the bright sunshine may reach its every part.

Now it seems to me that this is precisely a mother's work with her children, those living plants that spring up in her home. She too has to bend and train and prune; she too has to enlighten and refresh and nourish—to make the

best of what she finds in her child, and to endeavour to supply by actual teaching that which she discovers to be deficient. Training and teaching—let us notice each.

There can be but one opinion as to which of these must come first. Long before a child is capable of receiving an actual lesson, training will have made good progress. For as soon as it knows its mother's face and voice, and understands its own needs and comforts, its training has begun.

Once I heard a mother say, "For the first month of its life I am compelled to give in to baby, but after that time baby finds it must give in to me." That mother knew something of training.

"Baby is king," we all know, but there is no manner of reason why baby should be a tyrannical king. Those children who are most happy and content, are the bonniest and loveliest. There are babes who match, and babes who contrast. We have all heard such sentences as these—"That

mite of a child rules the house," and "You would not know there was a babe in the place;" and we are quite aware of the state of comfort or discomfort to which they bear testimony.

According to the training given by the mother, a babe, if it be healthy, either rules or is ruled. There is no manner of doubt about this: a mother can train her child into any habit she pleases to inculcate, if only she commence early enough.

We hear of mothers who strap their babes to a board, and then sling the board on their backs, or lean it against the wall, or hang it on a hook from the roof or a tree, as suits their own convenience, and the little ones are said to become sleek and fat, and content and good-tempered, and to develop into as fine specimens of men and women as though they had tired out the arms and exhausted the energies of twenty nurses.

We hear of mothers whose babes never cry at anything—who lie where they are laid, go to sleep at the right time without rocking or bribing or coaxing—who amuse themselves in all sorts of odd ways, and give as little trouble as possible. We hear of others who have "to walk the room for hours" to get a child to sleep—who say of their treasure, "It will be nursed the whole day long, and it's more than one person's work to amuse it." Why are such contradictory statements possible? Just because one child is trained into good habits from the very first, and the other has been allowed to form habits for itself.

"From the very first," we said. A child does not know aught of ways or times then. It readily accepts its mother's management, for it has no means of knowing there can be any other state or condition than submission. The touch of a mother's hand, more gentle and tender than any other touch; the tone of a mother's voice, more sweet and loving than any other voice, both speaking to the babe, not of fondness only, though they are filled with that, but of power, decision,

and firmness, are instruments sufficient for the work to be done. They will inspire the necessary confidence, and draw forth the restful, happy yielding to her desires. The way in which she handles it or talks to it, will settle at once and for ever the relative position they hold to each other.

It should be a strong point always, that nothing shall be done at one time which will have to be undone at some other time. Good training, like first-class sewing, must have no *unpicking*.

And we must remember that the great importance of all training is, that it lays the foundation for future work and teaching. If only this one habit be instilled in infancy, that the child obeys what the mother wills, think what a blessing is secured to both child and mother all their lives. It is worth some effort to secure this—thought and effort and earnest prayer.

Yes, prayer. For, tiny as the darling is, it will cost the mother something if she is to carry out

all the plans she makes for its good, and she will need strengthening and replenishing, or she will often feel discouraged. Thank God, there is no ultimate doubt about the matter—the end is sure and settled. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

And now let us notice some of the subjects to which a mother's teaching will be devoted.

Understand that such subjects will have very little to do with the rudiments of elementary knowledge. Plenty of opportunities and plenty of schools and teachers will present themselves for these things. But all through your child's life there will be no opportunity like the present for such lessons as we refer to, and but one mother to make use of it; for now must be sown the seeds of those truths which will bear fruit both here and hereafter.

And perhaps in these days of scoffing and unbelief, the one which must stand first in

importance will be that of reverence—reverence for holy things.

The child, while yet a babe, will learn that there is one day in the week which is best and happiest—when it has its best toys, its prettiest books, perhaps its most favourite dress, and some especial little dainty or privilege to be enjoyed. On this day most love will be lavished upon it, its mother will have most leisure to talk to it and listen to it, and all because it is God's day.

And it will learn equally soon that there is one book more than all others which its mother loves—a book from which she seeks comfort and guidance for herself, and out of which she takes the stories it thinks most beautiful; it will notice that whenever she reads in that book she is better and sweeter—more glad—more tender—more rested, and more patient; and day by day, as it stands by her side and she tries to store its memory with holy words of truth, the child understands that there is no book like "God's book."

And then it will learn that there is one name that is to be heard and uttered with reverence at all times. His mother's voice seems to hush as she says it gently, and her eyes to soften as she says it tenderly, and he knows it is "God's name," that is above every other name.

And as his mind is able to take in these things, she will show him how great and holy and good this God is, and how full of love to all His creatures. And she will let him know how earnestly she desires to serve Him; and how, more than anything else, she wants all her darling children to serve Him too.

And the child will never lose the influence of those lessons. The Sabbath will always be to him a day set apart, and God's Word the word of truth, and God's name a hallowed name. No matter where his lot may be cast, no matter that he shall hear "fools say there is no God," he will know in his heart the truth of his mother's teaching, and be saved from many a snare.

And next will follow lessons in truth and integrity and uprightness. It is impossible to separate these excellences of character. A thoroughly truthful man is sure to be an upright man, and a man whose integrity is unimpeachable. David, in the fifteenth Psalm, brings all these qualities together. He says:—

- "He that speaketh truth in his heart;"
- "Walks uprightly"—with rectitude and honesty of purpose;
 - "Works righteousness"—in strict integrity;
- "Will not backbite with his tongue," "nor take up a reproach against his neighbour"—No slander will be spread by him—no evil-speaking or false-witness.
- "If he swear to his hurt, he changeth not"

 —No going back from his word or his promise.
- "He will not lend his money on usury"—No taking advantage of another's needs or misfortunes.

"He takes no reward against the innocent"— He cannot be bought over or bribed.

"The lip of truth shall be established for ever." "He that walketh uprightly walketh surely."

Blessed indeed is that mother who can teach her children such things as these, and see them living out her lessons; but she will have much anxious thought and watching first. She will know how very easily opposite habits may be formed, and she will not be content only that nothing directly untrue is said, and that her children learn to give straightforward, unvarnished accounts of transactions, without the constant use of superlative adjectives; but she will be anxious that there shall be nothing of simulation or pretence even in their plays. I have seen very little children manifest intense disgust at shams even in their toys, and it is a good thing to encourage this feeling. Let them learn to play heartily as real children, and not as make-believe anythings. We do not wish

ABOUT TRAINING AND TEACHING.

34

them to dissemble; and it is so easy for that which is begun in play to end in earnest. It is by no means difficult for our darlings to act a lie; and everything which makes it easier yet, should be discouraged.

And in this, as in everything else, we must be careful that our own example bears out our lessons. There must be no deception, no subterfuge, no shadow of an untruth in what we do or say. No conventionality, no custom that impeaches our honesty and integrity in word or deed, must find a place in our household management. "Appearances" must be nothing to us except they are borne out by what really is; and in everything we must strive to be "sincere and without offence."

And besides these lessons, a mother must always exact ready obedience to her few commands and her reasonable wishes. She will know how needful to all excellence in character and success in life this submission to lawful authority

will always be. In the present day there is a tendency to kick against all manner of restraint, and both among our sons and daughters, what they are pleased to call "fun" and "jokes" is too often nothing more than a reckless disregard to the requirements of law and order. This is dangerous. The altered times in which we live push children on so much faster than they were wont to be pushed, that but for a mother's teaching and the precious home influence, our young ones stand in perilous places. Knowledge is not now made the handmaid of wisdom and discre-She is hurried on far ahead of them, and if ever they do overtake her, it is only too often after years of mischief have done their evil work We cannot attach too much importance to this subject. "Every soul must be subject to higher powers," and "the powers that be are ordained of God," are great lessons; and not less great are the words which follow-"Whoso resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God."

And another lesson not to be forgotten is self-control. Mothers cannot be too forcibly impressed with the fact that a child's after-success and after-usefulness also depend upon the power it can exercise over its own will, more than upon any other thing. No matter what that thing may be which rules the child now—its temper, its appetite, its vanity—it is only one form of that selfishness which, the more it is ignored, the nobler does the character become.

"But the child will outgrow these faults." No, don't flatter yourself so. Some other agency may come in if yours fails him, and teach the child the evil of the thing he persists in, and by God's help he may, after struggling and prayer, put it down; but every year he lives without such a blessed interruption, the evil must grow stronger and stronger. If mothers taught their children from the first to control their tempers, should we see as much malice and anger and evil-speaking in after-life as we do see now? If mothers

taught their children to put the body down with regard to their appetites, who can estimate the evil that would disappear with all manner of intemperance?

But instead of this, do we not rather foster in our children the very thing that is our greatest bane all through our lives? Do we not actually make self-gratification a reward?

"Time enough by and by to curb and control them," we say. "They shall have every indulgence I can give them; they are sure to get enough of crossing and trouble without my commencing it."

But do not these very crossings and troubles come because we hold back the lesson? Do not our children actually suffer, at hands all-unloving, the very discipline which we could have given so tenderly and easily? Should this thought have no weight with us?

And just a few words more. A mother will need to adapt her lessons to the individual temperament of her children. One is lacking in application and perseverance, another in industry, another in thoroughness, another in carefulness. I believe it is bad policy to keep pointing out faults; rather let us seek to exercise them in the good quality they lack, and then its opposite must lose its power over them. I am quite sure that do has far more power over all of us than don't. I remember once hearing quite a tiny one say, "When mother wants us to don't, she sets us to do;" and I am sure the plan answers.

And that every word we say may have double effect, let us take care that each of our children know of a certainty how very, very much we love them. We ourselves know it, but I am not sure that we are as careful to manifest the truth to each individual child as we might be. There should be no taking it for granted, in such a matter, that our children know it as well as we do. Let us take care that there shall exist a private individual understanding about this, between each child and ourselves, and every day

let us contrive some few seconds, at least, when we two alone shall let the love speak. The children may be many, and the time full: never mind, let us manage it, let us watch for chances; and though we only press the lips on the dear brow, and hold the darling in our arms but an instant—though we only clasp the hands in ours, and whisper "mother's own treasure," the child will be fortified by it—fortified to stand firm against that evil thing which mother hates; fortified to bear and endure anything, everything, rather than grieve the dear mother "who loves me so."

Mothers—and I say the words in all reverence—we stand to our children, in their early days, something in the position in which our dear Lord and Heavenly Father stands to us. Could you or I afford, when the battle is heavy and the way long, or even when our cup of blessing runneth over—could you or I afford to do without any one of those secret manifestations of His love, which steal over our souls, warming the coldness,

ABOUT TRAINING AND TEACHING.

40

and quickening the zeal, and drawing us nearer to Him?

And though none know of these manifestations except ourselves, is it not through them that we live and grow in Him?

Let us train our darlings, then; let us teach them the lessons the Master would have them to learn; but, oh, let us pray earnestly, constantly, that our whole work may be "rooted and grounded in love."





IV.

Thoughts about Hindrances.

E have all found how that it is next to impossible to attempt a good work of any kind without meeting with more or less opposition; and as the chances of success are great or small, and the agent employed to secure it earnest or half-hearted, so will the opposition be formidable or insignificant.

It is not to be expected, therefore, that mothers will be allowed to carry out the work they wish to do for their children without let or hindrance. We must expect to meet with obstructions without and within. And perhaps the former are most easily dealt with. Only let us feel that the child's good is of more consequence than

any other thing in the world, and this hill of difficulty will diminish considerably at once. Like others of the same class, its magnitude or its insignificance will depend mainly upon the measure of energy or determination brought to bear upon it. If we will have it so, trifles will appear insurmountable. And also, if we will have it so, no difficulty will be great enough to deter us.

So the first thing to be sure about, in considering the hindrances likely to come between us and our work as mothers, is whether we have counted the cost, and weighed well all that is required of us, and are prepared in spite of all obstacles to carry it through. Are we willing to give up anything and everything that stands in the way of our success, if only in the end our "children shall rise up and call us blessed;" and that not one of those whom God has given us shall be found wanting in any good thing?

And then having settled this point, let us think

over some of the things which are likely to be hindrances to us.

Perhaps we shall meet with no greater impediment than is brought to us by the claims of *Society*.

Very possibly we occupy an exalted position. Our husbands may be public characters, or our earlier life may have brought us within a large · circle of acquaintance, and we may be on friendly terms with a number of people. Well, this intercourse takes up time, occupies thought, and taxes strength. It cannot be otherwise. cannot have much to do with other people without mixing ourselves with what concerns them; and their hopes and fears, their doings and sayings, their successes and failures find a place in our thoughts, our plans, and our conversation. In some measure it is a plain duty that this should be allowed. We are to bear each other's burdens-to look not only on our own things, but also on the things of others. But if this is carried out to any great extent, it becomes an

44 THOUGHTS ABOUT HINDRANCES.

evil. The actual fact is, that our own concerns are quite sufficient to find full occupation for all our best powers. A little child once very truly and quaintly remarked to me: "When they tell me to think of too many things, some of them have to go unthoughted. My thinker is not big enough to hold so much." And our own danger is precisely that felt by the little child; every one who undertakes too much, either for thought or action, must either do some of it imperfectly, or leave some of it undone.

So we may be quite sure that we shall find a very large acquaintance undesirable. Without doubt our love and tact and unselfish devotion and good management will make us equal to any co-operative company in existence, but it is a limited company all the same. I remember a mother once speaking to me about the qualifications of a nurse she was seeking. "You see I must have a good one, one that can be thoroughly depended upon, because I am

obliged to go so much into society. nearly two hundred people that I call upon!" Poor mother! and poor, poor darlings! Can the most anxious and conscientious nurse in existence fill a mother's place? Is the mysterious tie and sympathy between a child and its mother transferable to hirelings? Will their anxiety be ever on the alert watching against evil, and detecting the first symptoms of it, as hers would watch and Is there not something almost superdetect? natural in a mother's instinct, which appears to be conscious of a danger even when it is afar off? Can any one else than her be expected to display this to the children? Surely it is unreasonable to expect it.

What is the use of our especial qualifications for this work, or our wonderful influence, if our children are to be laid aside or made over to the care of others, to enable us to meet "the calls of society"?

Motherless! Oh, what a pitiful condition for our

bright and noble boys, who need mother's guidance and approval as they climb higher and higher; and still more pitiful for our gentle and tender girls, so loving and anxious for love, and so easily led. Our eyes fill and our hearts grieve when we hear of those so bereaved by death. there are some orphaned ones with whom death has had nothing to do; who know they have a mother, because they see that occasionally she exercises a kind of general superintendence over their belongings. But as far as training is concerned, and with regard to the feeling that there is one whose heart is with their heart, whose loving sympathy is the best balm for all woes, and who understands their motives and desires as no one else can understand, they are motherless indeed.

Think of this, dear friends. Shall we dare to allow any secondary matter to sever the link, the strange mysterious link which binds us to our darlings, and permit their holiest desires and best resolves and hopes to shrink and dwindle and die, because the sun of our love never warms them or draws them out? Shall we leave them to become warped and distorted in mind and soul, because their feelings meet with no response?

Your kingdom is the home. Your throne is the hearts of its inmates. You cannot continually absent yourself, but usurpers will occupy your place, and the general wellbeing of all in your dominion will be affected by it.

Neither need it always be the claims of fashionable society that distract us from our lawful work. If you are benevolent, clever, and practical, there is a danger that you will be enticed into a career of public charity.

Do not mistake me. I know there never was a time when women, and mothers especially, did not put their hands heartily to every good word and work. But notice that I used the word "public." It is certainly the custom nowadays

48

to do in bodies what used to be done by individuals, to do publicly what used to be done privately, so far as our aid is concerned. I think . we might very fairly describe the age in which we live as "the age of Ladies' Committees." We seem to meet in little bands in all sorts of odd corners, and discuss matters rather pompously, and first and second all sorts of highsounding resolutions.

"In a good cause," you say! I grant it. Women and girls must be befriended. Children must be well looked after. Sanitary reforms must be carried out. But there is a danger, nav there is a fascination in all this—a kind of infectious fever which spreads and extends wonderfully if it once takes hold on us.

And sometimes there has been a good deal of doubt in my own mind as to the actual amount of blessing conferred by any one at these meetings, after all.

Very often the most energetic and enthusiastic

among us find ourselves saying, on hearing of some evil still without remedy, "Why! we had quite a nice meeting about it; did not anything come of it?"

One day after a good deal of thought on this subject, I was curious enough to hunt up from the lives of some of our greatest female philanthropists -such as Hannah More, Elizabeth Fry, &c.—the way in which their committees were managed, and perhaps you are not surprised that I obtained very small results. In their days, women did privately and single handed, what we talk about in num-There is certainly a danger that we shall be content with nothing but "talkee, talkee;" and this is the worst feature in the whole question: it salves over our conscience, and instead of asking ourselves honestly, "What am I actually doing in prayerful earnestness to help on this good thing, or lessen that evil one?" we are content with knowing "that something is sure to be done, because I moved or seconded a resolution (1)

about this very thing, and it was carried unanimously."

We cannot find time for everything; do we as a class actually visit the poor as much as our grandmothers did? Are the individual cases of want and misery and suffering within our actual reach, as well known to us as similar cases within their reach were known to them? I cannot believe women should ever deal with masses. I hate the word as far as charity and love is concerned. As individuals, we have to do good to individuals. We have to say to our poorer, less-favoured sister, "I am willing to do you good."

Heart should meet heart; our influence should be brought to bear upon single cases. Do not let us try to dispose of the welfare of our fellowcreatures in lumps. Meetings we can have, meetings we must have perhaps, but let us rather compare results than discuss projects.

And let each one of us try to concentrate our efforts. If each mother whose heart is touched

by loving pity towards those other mothers who are missing the blessing their motherhood should bestow, should kneel down and pray, "Show me some other mother I can benefit in thankoffering to Thee," would she not be shown—would not the Master find her the work she craved? And through that second mother would not the good spread? "If every one would mend one, all would be amended," was a copy I wrote when I was a child; its meaning is obvious, but I think we sometimes forget it.

Again I say, do not mistake me. I know there is a special promise to the two or three gathered together in the Master's name. Let the remembrance of this promise decide us then in the matter of the meetings to which we are pressed. Can we see the Master in the midst? Has His presence been looked for, and waited for? Then nothing but good can come of all such gatherings if our other duties permit us to attend them. Blessed is every member of any meeting where the dear Lord makes one.

And there is a small matter connected with our home life which is as likely to hinder us as anything—I mean its petty cares and worries. may be there are difficulties about servants, or about managing, or about making ends meet; there are a thousand and one such matters, each insignificant and trifling in themselves, yet which in the aggregate make a very wasp'snest of smart and sting in our daily lives. We must be very careful how these affect us. Our very holiest and purest work is our mother's work; if we do not watch, this may be well-nigh swamped, and made subservient to the veriest trifles. If you find that the effect of these things makes your tone impatient, or your temper irritable, or your manner harsh and unloving, then there is mischief abroad. It is quite true that in ordering all these things you are studying their comfort, and working for their good. But take care that these things do not order or regulate you. Don't forget Mary in being Martha.

And I can but hint at other hindrances. Our

own peculiar likes and dislikes, which it seems hard to sacrifice; our apathy and love of ease perhaps, which it is hard to overcome; perhaps our love of reading or music or painting,—it is hard to have to put it all aside for the children's sake, till some more convenient season.

Oh no, surely not hard! Is any book better worth reading than that spread out before you in the gradual development of your dear ones? Is any picture more lovely than your child's face—any music so sweet as its voice? Think a moment of the desolate darkness that would come upon you, if God should relieve you of the burden and take the children to His own bosom; would you care for the ease and the liberty to follow your own pursuits uninterruptedly then?

So trivial are these things,

Just pleasures that an hour from us may sever;

While every darling brings

Joys which will grow and last for ever.

Oh! blessed, blessed work to mothers given,

Began on earth, and finished up in Heaven.



V.

, About Helps.

HERE is a common saying amongst us, that "mothers always get last looked after." More than once when I have noticed in a mother some want which was telling upon her physically, she has said, "You see one does not think of one's self; if it was one of the children, I should be sure to remember it."

There is no doubt that too many of us fall into this mistake—for it is a great mistake. The better our own mental and physical condition, the more are we likely to do good, and be good, to those who depend upon us. Whatever rests or refreshes, comforts, cheers, or encourages us, is sure also to have its influence with them.

Depend upon it, we are not half careful enough on this matter. We have justly been designated "the weaker vessel;" we cannot bear long-continued strain on mind or body without injury. And our work is so unceasing, there are so many to be thought of and for, that our own recreating, refreshing, or invigorating does not enter our heads. This neglect of ourselves must in course of time tell upon our spirits, upon our patience, and upon our characters; and too often we only discover that mischief has been done, when that mischief has become too extensive longer to escape notice.

In course of time, I said. It may not be perceptible at first. While the little ones require play, and enjoy the games in which we take the lead, so far before any others, our freshness may be kept up. We all know the effect of a good romp with the darlings, considered as a freshener. But when they grow beyond this, and they and we come to sober realities, then this freshness wears

off, and there is a danger that we shall settle down into prosy sort of folks.

It is our plain duty, then, to avail ourselves of everything that shall make us more cheery and cheered, more peaceful and rested, while we are striving to cheer and rest other people. Where shall we look, then, for that most suited to our need?

First of all must come the help which is derived from intercourse and communion with the dear Lord "from whom cometh every good thing." Anything which brings us nearer to Him increases our knowledge of Him, and to know Him "is life eternal." To get near to Him in sorrow is to find comfort. To get near Him in difficulty is to find enlightenment. To get near Him in weakness is to find strength; near to Him there can be no want, for in Him dwelleth all fulness.

Let us briefly note some of the ways in which we may "draw nigh to God."

1. By prayer, when we speak to Him.

Morning and evening will perhaps be our regular times for kneeling down and pouring our desires and our wants into His ear, and it is fitting that our rising up and our lying down should be thus consecrated. But we shall by no means confine our times of prayer to these. David said, "Evening and morning and at noonday will I pray;" but he also said, "When I am in trouble," "what time I am afraid," "when strangers rise up against me," "when the battle is too strong for me," "when my soul thirsteth for God," "when I am ready to halt." "This poor man cried; and the Lord heard him, and delivered him out of all his troubles." Whatever may be our difficulty, our perplexity, no matter the time or place, we are commanded and invited to make that the occasion of seeking the Master for guidance.

And let us not be content with generalities in prayer. Let us tell God precisely what is

worrying us, and what we desire. We know well enough that He knows all about it already, but we cannot afford to miss the comfort of telling Him. If your darling's heart is overwhelmed with some childish trouble, do not you encourage him "to tell mother all about it," though you may already be aware of every particular concerning it? And you know how the heart is lightened by the telling, though the trouble that remains in it is as great as ever.

If you have never tried the plan with our Father, try it now. Tell God everything. Eddie or Willy or Amy has a violent temper, a strong will, or a naughty habit, or a little ailment. Don't be content with asking for wisdom and patience in all things; ask for wisdom and patience in this thing. Spread the letter out before the Lord, mention the foe by name, and go very particularly into the difficulty, and then try and leave it with God to direct you in the best way. Only wait and be ready to carry out

His directing. Do not talk about it—try and not grieve about it. Rise up as Hannah did, no longer a woman of sorrowful countenance, but "believing ye shall receive" the thing you have asked of Him.

And this lifting up of the heart to God will be no hindrance to you. The oftener you get near Him the better will the work go on, and the smoother and more successful will it be; and as for yourself, you will be happier and more restful, more capable of meeting and removing difficulties when they do arise, and more clever in preventing them before they have arisen.

2. By reading His word, when we listen to Him. Never let a day pass without this. If you are able to secure to yourself an uninterrupted hour for this purpose, happy will you be. But if, as is almost always the case, your time will be too crowded to admit of this, then read a few passages only, and let your thoughts run upon them whenever it is possible. I know a mother

who has trained her little daughters to bring her a text or two every morning; and I have seen them hunting at night before going to rest, "to find something nice for mother," robbing themselves of their playtime for the purpose. And the texts so found fixed themselves in the children's minds, as well as comforted the mother's heart.

3. By frequenting the Lord's table. We must not let the comfort of this blessed ordinance escape us. Let us have our stated times and seasons, not communicating by fits and starts, but regularly at some given time, which may be looked forward to and prepared for. By such a plan we shall be able to manage that nothing amid our numerous cares and occupations shall be allowed to encroach upon or appropriate this time.

Ah! we must all find, the more constantly we draw near to God and listen to His voice in His Word, that the greatest hindrances to our work are to be found in *ourselves*; and in this blessed ordinance especially, we throw ourselves into the



arms of His mercy. While remembering His death and passion for us, yea for us particularly, our own needs, our own shortcomings, should be most present to our minds; then we are so overwhelmed with our own unworthiness and barrenness, that we seem to stand alone in His presence. And if it is a help to leave other cares in His hands, is it not an especial help to leave ourselves with Him?

4. And we should "enter His gates with thanks-giving whenever we can." Of course we shall do this on His day. But in well-ordered families the Sabbath worship is preceded by a Sabbath hush and peace on all and everything, which prevents the contrast between the active service and the quiet worship being as much marked as on other days. But if we are able to go, only to listen to the prayers or the Bible reading, from the midst of the hurry and worry of all our home business, it is an unspeakable comfort to us: The words we hear may be familiar words, but they

come upon us with a scothing and peace that acts as balm upon all that is heated or worn or harassed.

5. And one other help we must notice, which is sadly underestimated among us. I mean "breathing time" - moments for quiet thought, uninterrupted and unbroken, when we can allow our minds to unloose themselves, and go free into the great world of reflection and consideration within the soul's compass; when we can trace the course of our failures or successes, and test the reasonableness of our hopes and fears, and plan and scheme for the good of all. We can do this over our sewing sometimes, but better still in the open air during a quiet walk. It seems to me we even think more healthily with only God's blue sky over our heads; and so much that is great enough to distress us at home, sinks to its own insignificance in the open country. Who can stand, only for a few moments perhaps, looking abroad over God's fair earth, the eye resting almost unconsciously on tree and flower, hill and dale, while the thoughts go off and away, without feeling riper and readier for all that is to come?

Quiet times! we cannot multiply their number perhaps, but as often as we can let us get the benefit of them,—quiet time for prayer, for the hearing of His voice, for communion, and for worship: for these are our helps, and means of renewing. "For thus saith the Lord God, 'Take heed, and be quiet; fear not, nor be faint-hearted." "The Egyptians shall help in vain: therefore have I cried concerning this, 'Their strength is to sit "For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, 'In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength.'" "Therefore will the Lord wait, that He may be gracious unto thee, and therefore will He be exalted, that He may have mercy upon thee." "And ye shall have a song, as in the night; and gladness of heart." (Isa. vii. 4; and XXX. 7, 15, 18, 29.)



VI.

Rewards and Punishments.

HAVE sometimes thought what a pity
it is that so many of the nursery
rhymes of our own young days should

be almost forgotten.

How many of us can well remember those "Poems Original and Select," by "several young persons," written expressly for "that interesting race, the race of children," as the preface said. And those of us who can so remember, will recall the lesson instilled by "Playing with the Fire;" "The little Girl who told a Lie;" "The Truant Boys;" "Washing and Dressing," or "Finery."

There were two volumes of these books, if I

remember rightly. They were written in simple, childish language for the most part—though there was one or two about the planets which left me in a very thick fog indeed; the people or events described were just such as were interesting to the age they were intended for, and the moral was openly and boldly set forth, without any reservation whatever.

"Simple and childish," I said. Well would it be for our little ones if all their books could be so described. I have not much patience with those books for children which are trying constantly to elevate the mind. Let us keep our little children as long as we can; it will be quite time enough when they are become men and women for them to "put away childish things." A child ought to be childish—childish in its desires, in its plays, in its reading, and in its simplicity. I should like to start a mother's society for the punishment of those who spoil childhood—yes, spoil or shorten it.

Perhaps among the rhymes I have spoken of, one of the greatest favourites was the one to "My Mother." What a tribute these simple lines were to the excellence of the mother of these "several young persons." In case you should have forgotten it, or may not have it among your nursery lore, let me write it here.

- "Who fed me from her gentle breast,
 And hushed me in her arms to rest,
 And on my cheek sweet kisses pressed?
 My mother.
- "When sleep forsook my open eye,
 Who was it sang sweet lullaby,
 And rocked me that I should not cry?
 My mother.
- "Who sat and watched my infant head,
 When sleeping in my cradle-bed,
 And tears of sweet affection shed?

 My mother,
- "When pain and sickness made me cry, Who gazed upon my heavy eye, And wept for fear that I should die? My mother.

- "Who dressed my doll in clothes so gay,
 And taught me pretty how to play,
 And minded all I had to say?

 My mother.
- "Who ran to help me when I fell,
 And would some pretty story tell,
 Or kiss the place to make it well?
 My mother.
- "Who taught my infant lips to pray,
 And love God's holy book and day,
 And walk in wisdom's pleasant way?
 My mother.
- "And can I ever cease to be
 Affectionate and kind to thee,
 Who wast so very kind to me,
 My mother?"

Not very long ago I came across an illustrated edition of this little poem, published, I think, by Warne, and I gave it as a present to a bright little girl. The pictures were very taking. There was the pretty cot and the sleeping babe, the fall, the doll, and everything else the rhyme mentioned. It was very clear to the little one—something quite within her capacities, and she eagerly turned over

the leaves again and again. Presently another thought seemed to strike the child, and she began peeping between all the pages for something she missed evidently.

"What picture are you looking for, dear?" I asked.

"I can't find one where the mother is popping the little girl when she was naughty, nor where she's giving her goodies for being good."

The child was quite right. These "several young persons" in writing about "my mother" had nothing at all to say of rewards and punishments.

And they were quite right. A perfect mother-hood should have little indeed—or, better still, nothing whatever—to do with such things.

Now and then in our reading we come across the words of some of the great ones of the earth respecting their own early days. What is it that the best and greatest tell us of their own personal experience in this matter? Just this: "If I am in any way different to my fellows, I owe it all to the lessons I received from my mother. Truly her ways with us were all wisdom and love. I do not remember that she ever punished us, or ever gave us any bribe; the expression of her joy at our well-doing, and her gentle, loving sorrow at our misconduct, were the only instruments she used in training us aright."

But you may say, "Children must be corrected." Surely yes. And no one will do this as tenderly as a mother can. But does correction necessarily imply punishment?

And again you may say, "Children who do well ought to be encouraged; it is very hard if they are not to receive a just reward for their deeds." Again I say, surely yes. Remember I am speaking of a mother's work towards them. A mother may correct without punishing. A mother may encourage without bribing.

Understand here that by encouragement I

mean loving approval; by reward, I mean something given or awarded because something has been done or left undone.

A child writes an exercise on a fair page. She is careless over it. Here is a blot, there is a word ill-written, here again is a word misspelt. The mother casts her eye over it, and calls the child to her side. "See, my darling, what do you think of your page?" Possibly the child begins to make excuses. She is ashamed now, though she heeded not at the time. "Mother, my pen, or my ink, or my"—something else.

Her mother stops her. "Never mind any of that now, my child. You know how anxious I am that my little daughter should learn to do everything well, and that all her work should be a credit to her. Answer my question, love. What do you think of this page?"

"I think it's just horrid, mother."

"So do I, darling. And it might have been nice if my child had remembered to take pains.

Look at this blot; see this misspelt word; these strange-looking letters and words, without neatness, grace, and beauty. Let me take out the page, dear, and do you go at once and do it nicely; and then we will look at it again."

This is mother's correction.

Suppose another mother in a like case.

"My child, I meant to have taken you with me for a walk, or on a visit; but you have done your lesson so badly, you shall not go. Stay at home and do it all over again, and if it is not done well when I return, I shall do such and such things."

This is punishment.

Which way of treatment would be likely to have the best effect?

In the one case, the child would be softened and stirred up to do well. In the other, there would be, perhaps, hardness or bitterness or anger, for children do not estimate their wrongdoings as their elders do. At any rate, there would be a kind of hopeless disappointment, which is the very worst thing to bring about a healthy effort from any living thing. And for the time, at least, the child gives way to a kind of sullen indifference, or to a passionate remonstrance.

Mothers! nothing that we do to our children is wise or good if it stir in them any wrong feeling. There ought to be so much love, so much tenderness, such a perfect understanding and union between a mother and her children, that her words and her doings with them shall awake in them nothing but good.

Alas! alas! we do not think enough of this holy truth. We hear from mothers' lips such words as these, "The more I punish them, the worse they behave;" "I am sure I cannot tell what to do with the boy; he seems to take no notice when I do punish him."

And how general is the expression, "He is getting beyond home management, he must go to school."

Ah! there was a good deal of truth in the old saying, "You may punish in twenty faults, in punishing out one."

Dear friends, these things ought not so to be. We have the early training and teaching of our children. They are in our hands; we mould and shape them almost as we will. We can train them to regard a smile or a kiss as their greatest possible reward. We can train them so that a grieved look, or a few gentle sorrowful words, is their greatest possible punishment.

"I can stand the master's frown, and ever such a jolly licking from the gaffer, but I can't go in and tell my mother I've deserved it, though. There'll be a look in her eyes that would floor me at once." So spoke a dear lad in one of our public schools.

There will come a time when our children go from our care—our boys, at least. If they have received their training in principles at our hands as they should have done, they will never be mean scamps or daring reprobates, though they may be bright, manly, venturesome lads. They will mix with other boys, and join plans and schemes which will often lead them into scrapes. They will never wilfully break a rule, but they may often find they have incurred punishment. They will accept the position just as they accept twelve pence as change for one shilling. They undergo the infliction, the imposition, or the deprivation as a thing of course. The matter does not go deep enough to affect them beyond the present moment. Their own sense tells them that in legislating for a number it is necessary that there shall be a code of rules, the infringement of which must insure personal inconvenience to the offender. But this is very different to mother's treatment. It must be impossible that she should willingly give pain; that she should sit and scheme and plan how she shall best punish, so that the child may never forget it. Oh, it is too terrible to think of.

But you may say, "But we do not sit and make plans. It is just the opposite. The children offend, perhaps, again and again. Of course I am annoyed and vexed. Then and there I punish them. I give them correction at once, and the more angry they have made me, the more severely they suffer."

Just think over all such an admission implies. Let us suppose you are unwell; a noise sadly affects your head. You have told your child to close the door quietly. Well, he comes in, in a rush of spirits, and bangs it after him tremendously. You are very angry—ever so much more angry than yesterday when you were not suffering. What is the consequence to your child? His punishment is to be measured by your anger, not weighed according to the merits of his fault. Is it any wonder that you stir up a sense of injustice or bitterness? Are you not unjust? Is there any injustice anywhere that does not call forth corresponding bitterness?

The greater our annoyance from any constitutional irritability, or nervous affection, or physical weakness, or pressure of business even, the more urgent need is there that for this season. at least, we shall let the child alone. We are in no condition then to deal with matters which should call forth our best and most loving energies to grapple with them. Oh, do let us think rightly of such things. Let us get into the way of making our children a party to their right management. "My darling, it is not kind to bang the door when mother is suffering. Come to me presently, and we will talk about it." Oh, it is worth while to notice how the child will manage the door when he does come presently!

But we are only human beings, after all—we poor, tried, and anxious mothers. It is no wonder if we do sometimes forget, and sometimes make a mistake. Suppose we feel we have spoken angrily, or punished unduly or un-

justly. And as we look at the sad face of the precious darling, we feel a remorseful bitterness that makes our eyes fill and our hearts throb. What then? Still that same mother's remedy for all ills—Talk it over with the child.

"Darling, was mother too angry with you just now? Did I understand that you had done or not done such a thing against my wishes; or ought I to have waited until I had heard more about it? You know how grieved mother would be to cause you any unnecessary sorrow, my precious one."

And what will the child do? Dear friends, I will tell you what my children do. They will go over every little detail with the most exact minuteness, striving by every possible means to prove themselves and the whole world in the wrong, in order that mother may be right.

Oh, as I look into my own heart, and remember the many, many times when I have fallen short of the standard which all mothers should aim at reaching; when I remember the after talks with my many dear children, I know that the only condemnation I ever received was from my own lips; and I have no hesitation in saying that nothing binds heart to heart and soul to soul so firmly, so completely, as such a union as this.

Did it ever seem strange to you that so very little is said in the Epistles respecting the way in which children are to be managed? The duties of servants, of masters, of children are clearly enough defined, while very little is said to us.

"Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

"Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged."

It is almost as though nothing needed any special instruction, except perhaps this very question of punishment. It is as though, if we were careful to stir up no wrong feelings in their hearts, then our love might be trusted in every-

thing else. There is very much food for earnest prayer and for careful thought in the two passages I have quoted. "Bring them up," "nurture," "admonition," "lest they be discouraged," are all expressions which will bear considering. May God help us all to "consider" them.

And just a few more thoughts about rewards.

I believe it is a matter on which we are all agreed, that the motive which prompts us to do right because we shall get something for it, is a very low motive. Our children ought never to receive "payment" for the performance of any duty, or for the practice of any virtue. All these things you will commend and encourage, but you must neither bribe to them, or reward for them. "You do so and so, and then I'll give you such a thing," is simply a shocking bargain between a child and its mother. If mothers have to pay for children's services, for whom will children work for nothing? 'A well-trained child values more than all else its mother's loving appro-

bation;—"That's a dear laddie," or "Mother's brave, or tidy, or helpful, or thoughtful little lassie," accompanied with a kiss.

I have done wonders, after a child's effort to do the right, by catching them alone for a moment. "Who was it I heard speaking so kindly to little sissy just now when she was cross?" And when the flushed bright face gave the answer, the words, "my own dearie," accompanied by the touch of endearment, were better than any reward. But setting aside all question of faults, I think there are times when a little gift may mark a mother's The child who shows the tidiest approbation. room, the neatest set of drawers, the most carefully kept clothes, &c., may honestly and openly claim some coveted treasure, fairly earned in the general competition. And even in such cases as this, I think the prize-winner should be decided by the children themselves, and mother should act only as a court of appeal.

One thing we must never forget. No reward,

no approbation should take the form of something nice to eat. It is such a temptation to children, such a snare, this love of nice things, that anything which panders to it must be an evil. I have known mothers who were constantly bribing their children all day long in this way. They had a sweetie if they went to school without crying; a sweetie if they kissed their brother or sister; a sweetie if they went to bed like a good child; and at last, whenever the sweetie-box was empty, all rule and order disappeared. It is most important that a mother's training should embrace this keeping under the appetites. It is of no use our telling them to check it one day, and then stirring it up and strengthening it another

> My mother smiled! It was enough; The work was hard, the way was rough; But what was work or road to me, When her dear eyes greet smilingly?

My mother blessed! Then passed away The toil and moil of many a fray: She knew how bravely I had striven, Nor flinched until success was given. (1) .

82 REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS.

My mother loved! Could any breast Yield me again such love, peace, rest? Such blessing, smile, such tender love Must ever my sure anchor prove.





VII.

About Children's Pleasures.

HIS earth of ours can show no spot,
Whate'er it lacks of treasure,
That's bare enough, or dull enough,
To stay the children's pleasure.

They find it through the winter chill,
And 'neath the summer's sun;
In every place and every race
The children will make fun.

We gather them between four walls,
And talk of law and rule;
We say that other things than play
Must occupy at school.
What games are planned behind each book,
What tricks they cogitate!
And none too often is it sums
Which occupy the slate.

We settle them to sober work,
Obstructions we remove;
The longest seam, the heaviest task,
Ladders and ropes will prove.

84 ABOUT CHILDREN'S PLEASURES.

And though their little forms are still,
Though not a word they say,
Their spirits light, and hearts so bright,
Will wander off to play.

Let all who toil beneath a load
In midday's sultry noon,
Take care lest they should rob a child
Of one such joy too soon.
Give them as much as in you lies
Of memory's greatest treasure,
To cheer an after-life of care—
A childhood full of pleasure.

I suppose there is not much doubt that we live in times when it is the fashion to push on everything. The merit of those who can push, and who make it a business to push, consists in their being able to push faster than their fellows. To bring things to perfection before the natural period for such full development, is the aim almost always. Of course results are not so good. Who expects to find the full flavour in forced fruits that we look for in those which take their own time? And of course also that which is stimulated

to unnatural exertion is very soon done for; the extra effort wears it out, and it has to be laid aside as a second-rate, worn-out kind of article long before its time.

Now, while we freely admit the truth of all this in matters concerning vegetation, I am sadly afraid we blind our eyes to the fact that we are allowing our children to be educated and trained generally by precisely the same kind of forcing The time was when a mother, in process. choosing a school for her darlings, looked out for the healthiest situation and the best food, and where the lessons were easy. Now a mother would be set down as "fond" if these matters occupied the first place in her attention! chief recommendation to us in these times is: "He brings the boys on very fast, and they teach them almost everything;" or, "All the girls presented for the Oxford and Cambridge local took firsts, or passed in honours, last year."

į

And when the children come staggering home under a most grievous load of prizes, crowned with glory, what matters it that the eye is heavy, the shoulders slightly rounded, or the frame languid?

'Eddie has done well this term," a loving mother said to her husband. "He has carried off all the best prizes."

"Why did you not tell me about it, my son? Then I could have congratulated you."

"Oh, I suppose I got rather sick of the whole affair, and so let it drop."

"And what has Tom brought?"

"Muscle, father—just muscle. Feel how hard it is," he added, baring his arm. "That's the sort of stuff to bring into the business by and by; don't you think it is?"

It is sad to hear the cry concerning the loss of physical development—deterioration by so many inches—in so many generations in the English race; sad to find languor when there ought to be energy; sad to see our brightest and cleverest dropping out of earnest life-work at the very time when their ancestors were fullest of vigour,—some of them "laid aside not very strong," or else "early called away," with all their life's purpose unfulfilled.

Depend upon it, the high-pressure system does its work as surely in the animal as in the vegetable kingdom. "Worn out," "not good for much after a year or two," are words to be applied to both cases alike. We know that mental work wears and exhausts the frame far more than ordinary physical labour; and this, too, with full-grown men, whose sinews are set and complete. Yet these men strike if any effort is made to lengthen out their day, to add so much as a quarter of an hour to the time appointed. All of us have heard of "the nine hours' movement." Yet I know of schools and colleges where delicate, growing girls are kept at their lessons longer than this. From half-past six

to eight o'clock; from nine to half-past twelve; from two to five; from half-past six to nine. Ten and a half hours' close application to books, and as much between as they can possibly snatch to work up this or that in which they feel themselves a little behind! For they must keep up. They are carried along by the merciless tide; the tried, the plodding, the weakly must all keep together; and those who are least fitted to struggle at all, must make the greatest effort.

How can we look for perfect blossoms from plants worn out by forcing? How can we expect to find bright, healthful, energetic, hearty, and sonsy, glad and happy *mothers*, in the overworked, forced young girls of our present-day system of education? Surely there are other ways of reducing our superfluous population than this.

And the same system is carried into the schools for the poor. Always pressure! So much to be got through in a given time, so many passes to be secured, such a percentage to be obtained, or the school and its teachers will lose their prestige, or worse still, the grant.

Oh, how those child guardians—"the angels who always behold the face of the Father"—must have sorrowed when the scheme of "payment by results" first went forth in England as a school law! Half fed, badly housed, worked and worried at home, worked and worried at school. Oh, how our children must long for the good old times back again!

Many a mother, in my hearing, has mourned over the evil, and her own inability to rectify it. "They compel us to send them to school, and as the lessons must be done, what they do not get through in the regular hours, they must stay and do after. Then they hurry home to their meals, then back to work again, and at night they bring home a batch of lessons to learn in the evening. People complain that mothers don't teach the girls to help them, and so they

grow up ignorant of household duties. I may safely say I never get an hour's help from my daughter—she has no time. And I am overdone with the extra effort I must make in order to save her from punishment."

Dear friends, this is no overdrawn, fancy picture. We are in all classes cultivating our children's intellect at the expense of their health, their duties, and their pleasures.

In how many cases does the success of a child's future depend upon its scholarly acquirements? Surely I am justified in saying, "not one quarter." We would not have them ignorant, but is it necessary that all should abide by the same curriculum? There was so much sense in the old-fashioned plan of bringing a child on in those things for which it manifested a decided talent! All are not born mathematicians or musicians. If these things are forced into the mind against or in spite of natural incapability, of what use are they to the child?

Mothers, it is our duty to guard our children from every ill. Surely here is a wolf in sheep's clothing which we are not awake to. We are robbing our darlings of their childhood, and filling our nurseries with miniature men and women.

And what will be the consequence of this?

Go to those who have the rearing of any young thing whatever, and what will they say?

"It had too much sun, or too much moisture, or too little fresh air while it was a seedling, and it never came on well after."

"It was not done well by when it was a young thing, and it will always be an awkward, unprofitable beast."

"Do them well at the beginning, and they will pay you for it all their lives afterwards."

"If you put a beastie to work before it is fit, you just ruin the thing altogether," and so on.

We look well after our children's morals and our children's comforts; are we taking equal care about their pleasures? To a child everything ought to be a pleasure. Whatever is a weariness to it, is a mistake. It ought to learn gladly, to perform its little duties gladly, and to play gladly. Nothing that a healthy, well-trained child is expected to do, should call for tears or disgust. No one class in the world is so eager to receive information on new subjects as children are, if only it is presented in the right form. "If he ask bread, will ye give him a stone?"—if he desire milk, will ye feed him with strong meat?

Oh, why do not more mothers make an effort to teach their own children? It may not be possible to do this altogether, perhaps; but we could undertake the difficulties, at least. Surely we who best love the child, who best know the turns and capacities of their various minds, who have the necessary tact and patience—surely we should be the first to discover when any work is getting irksome, and also the first to divine the cause of the irksomeness.

If we did this - if the child knew that mother could put everything right for it, how much burden would be removed! And remember we are the best judges of what is good for the child. Do not let any one, however learned or clever, interfere with us here. Will any amount of learning compensate for a sickly body or overcharged brain? Every mother is justified in chafing under interferences in this her especial province. Let us watch our lads and lasses. Just the results which spring from overwork in our own case, will follow overwork in theirs. We feel irritable, so do they; we feel incapable of bearing or enduring, so do they; we feel inclined to do things by halves or let them slip altogether, so do they. Let us take care that they have enough to do, to learn, or to think about, to make their life a pleasure to them, but never so much as to make it heavy or irksome.

And you will know that pleasure need not always be play. Children will get a share of that

ţ

in spite of every discouraging influence. But a child should pass from one occupation to another with a bounding step and a glad heart, and "make" or "punish" ought to be words it knows only as regards the spelling of them.

But before I leave these thoughts for your thinking, let me remind you of one pleasure especially which needs a mother's care. I mean the pleasure which children derive from books. There never was an age when these were so numerous as they are now, and I do not think we are half careful enough in selecting them. We wish to give a new volume, and we are often guided to a choice far more by the general get-up and the pictures than by anything else about it. all we ascertain to the contrary, the letterpress may be deadly poison. It is true the name of the publisher is one guarantee easily made use of, but we do not always avail ourselves of it. We may allow one silly, or absurd, or incorrect, or unnatural story to be placed in our child's hands,

and may find afterwards that it has sown seeds of mischief almost to the destruction of all our teaching.

And in these days of infidelity, when the agents of the devil are so busy spreading unbelief among the most tender lambs of the flock, we cannot be too much on the alert. Let me tell you a little event which transpired only a few weeks back.

The children were feeding their rabbits before breakfast; they kept them in a yard at the side of the house, round which was a low wall. Some one in passing heard the children's voices, and tossed over a neatly-folded illustrated paper.

The little ones picked it up, but had only time to unfold it when they were called to prayers; they carried the paper with them and put it into the mother's hand.

Always on the watch for evil to her darlings, she laid it by, and when opportunity came she looked into its contents.

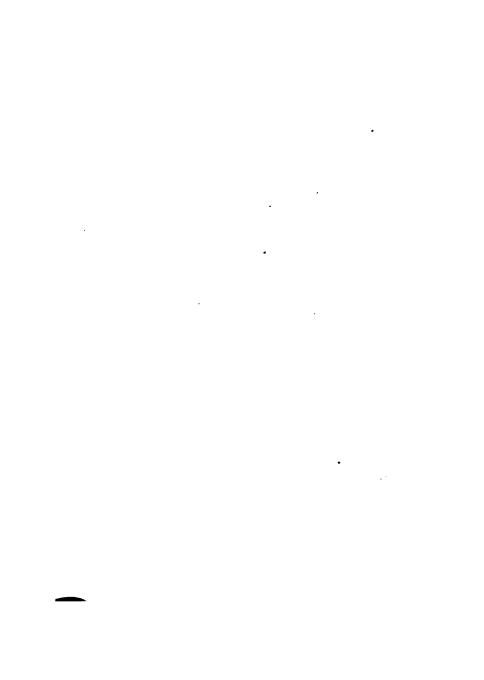
It was an infidel paper addressed to children.

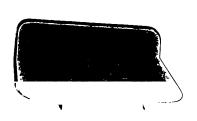
God, the High and Holy One, was spoken of under a blasphemous title. His existence, His power, and His word were denied; and under the guise of fun and ridicule, all our most sacred things were mocked at.

How are we to keep our darlings from such perils as these?

Let us not despair. By God's help our life work will not be a failure. We need this help daily and hourly. Let us seek to give our children "a sound mind in a healthy body," which is the greatest blessing we can give them. With such love to us, their mothers, as they must feel, and such faith in their mother's God as they learn from our every word and deed, we may then trust the children of our love to walk safely amid snares and pitfalls, more than conquerors through the dear Lord who loves us all.







•

.

.

•

•

